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Geriatric disorders prevailing among elderly: At an old age home in Haryana

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Abstract

The increase in the number of older adults in the country there is a rapid increase in nuclear families, and contemporary changes in psychosocial matrix and values often compel this segment of society to live alone or in old age homes. When an aging adult has a cognitive need, a physical concern, or a mental health concern, adding aging to the mix can create some struggles for the older adult. While there is a lot of focus on the mental health of younger people, it is equally important for elderly individuals to get treatment, especially for depression, which can complicate the treatment of a number of medical conditions including stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and more. The aim of the study was to study geriatric mental health and associated morbidities among elderly living at old age home called Moksha, Hisar, Haryana. Consent from the participants (elderly) was obtained. Survey Psychiatric Assessment Schedule (SPAS), Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE), Mood Disorder Questionnaire (MDQ) were applied. Thirty elderly who gave their consent to participate in the study were interviewed. Depression (43.33% in females and 33.33% in males) was found to be the most common geriatric mental health problem followed by dementia and anxiety issues. Maximum of the male respondents were having the urinary problem 86.66% followed by blood pressure 80%; weight loss 66.66% on the other hand female faced the maximum problem due to diabetes and blood pressure 80% followed by asthma 60%. Majority of the respondents faced the blood pressure 80% and cataract 76.66% health problem in the body. The majority of the elderly were having mental morbidity and no one was observed physically fit i.e had one or more than one physical morbidity.

Keywords: Geriatric, mental morbidity, physical morbidity, depression, elderly

Introduction

Geriatric is relating to old people, especially with regard to their healthcare or an old person, especially one receiving special care. Special groups are those who need special attention such as children, women, HIV, handicap and aging. When an aging adult has a cognitive need, a physical concern, or a mental health concern, adding aging to the mix can create some struggles for the older adult. Some of these problems include: *Financial Concerns* – Limited financial resources and full-time earning opportunities can make senior years even more challenging. *Medical Concerns* – Mounting medical needs, medical bills – including those for adaptive equipment – prescription costs, and home care can rapidly accumulate. *The Need for Decision Makers* – Developmental, cognitive and physical disabilities may require the individual to have a decision maker. *Challenges with Social Communication and Understanding* – A lack of social communication and understanding can make it challenging for disabled seniors to function in society. the Indian family system is often held at high position for its qualities like support, strength, duty, love, and care of the elderly. The responsibility of the children for their parents' wellbeing is not only recognized morally and socially in the country, but it is a part of the legal code in many states in India. But urbanization, modernization, industrialization, and globalization have brought major transformations in the family in the form of structural and functional changes. As a result of these socio-demographic changes, older adults at times are forced to shift from their own place to some institutions/old age homes. Depression is a type of mood disorder that ranks as the most pervasive mental health concern among older adults. If untreated, it can lead to physical and mental impairments and impede social functioning. Common symptoms of depression include ongoing sadness, problems sleeping, physical pain or discomfort, distancing from activities previously enjoyed, and a general "slowing down." Like depression, anxiety is a very common mood disorder among the elderly. In fact, these two problems often appear in tandem. Women in this age group are more likely to be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder than men.

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This segment of population is more vulnerable to health-related problems including mental health problems. Various prevalence studies have reported mental health problems among older adults to be very higher than other age groups. The available literature indicates that there are hardly any effort to understand the morbidity and the needs of such elderly people and specific studies related to the issue are hardly available. Viewing it, to assess mental health and other associated morbidities among inhabitants of old age homes, a study was planned and carried in a Old Age Home of Hisar, Haryana

Materials and Methods

The elderly of age 60 years and above of Old Age Home named Moksha of Hisar, Haryana were studied. Elderly who had any physical disorder or were refusing to be part of the study were excluded. A total of 30 elderly were thus selected from the Old Age Home. A semi-structured interview schedule was used. The elderly or the care takers were enquired about the common preexisting chronic health ailments. Contact was made with older adults of these old age homes and their consent to participate in the study was taken. Survey Psychiatric Assessment Schedule (SPAS), Mini

Mental Status Examination (MMSE), Mood Disorder Questionnaire (MDQ) were used as assessment tools. To find out the physical morbidity among these subjects, information was obtained from them by enquiring about their physical health and prescriptions of the doctors/ medications etc. All the elderly were categorized into three sub-groups—young-old: 60 to 69 years; old-old: 70 to 79 years; and oldest-old: 80 years and above and data analysis was done by employing percentages and test of significance.

Results

Socio-demographic profile

Table 1 states that majority of elderly were illiterate (43.33%), followed by just literate (26.66%) and primary (16.66%) and only 6.66% of elderly were professional qualifications and 3.33% were graduate. More males were illiterate (53.33%) as compared to females (33.33%). A majority of the elderly were widowed (females = 60%; males = 53.33%). Among males, 20% of the participants were married and whereas in females 26.66% were having married status. A majority of the females were financially dependent (73.33%), likewise a majority of the males (60%) were financially dependent and 40% were independent.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile

Socio-demographic details	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Education						
Illiterate	08	53.33	05	33.33	13	43.33
Just literate	02	13.33	06	40	08	26.33
Primary	03	20	03	20	05	16.66
High school	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intermediate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Graduation	01	6.66	-	-	01	3.33
Professional	01	6.66	01	6.66	02	6.66
Total	15	100	15	100	30	100
Marital status						
Married	03	20	04	26.66	07	23.33
Unmarried	04	26.66	02	13.33	06	20
Separate	-	-	-	-	-	-
Widow	08	53.33	09	60	17	56.66
Total	15	100	15	100	30	100
Financial dependence						
Dependent	09	60	11	73.33	20	66.66
Independent	06	40	04	26.66	10	33.33
Total	15	100	15	100	30	100

Pattern of mental health problems

Table 2 reveals that a majority of elderly were suffering from depression (Males = 33.33%; Females = 46.66%). In males, the subsequent disorder was found to be dementia (33.33%) followed by no mental disorder (13.33%), anxiety (13.33%) followed by schizophrenia (6.66%). Anxiety disorders were found to be second leading disorders in females (26.66%).

Dementia was found to be prevalent more in males (33.33%) than females (20%). Mental health problems were found to more common in the oldest-old group. In males, all elderly except one in each age group except 13.33% of the participants were suffering from one or other mental health problem. In females, everyone was suffering from one or the other mental disorders.

Table 2: Pattern of mental health problems

Description	Male					Female				
	No mental disorder	Depression	Dementia	Anxiety	Schizophrenia	No mental disorder	Depression	Dementia	Anxiety	Schizophrenia
Young-old	02 (13.33)	02 (13.33)	-	-	-	-	02 (13.33)	-	-	-
Old-old	01 (6.66)	-	02 (13.33)	-	01 (6.66)	-	02 (13.33)	01 (6.66)	01 (6.66)	-
Oldest-old	-	03 (20)	03 (20)	02 (13.33)	-	-	03 (20)	02 (13.33)	03 (20)	01 (6.66)
Total	02 (13.33)	05 (33.33)	05 (33.33)	02 (13.33)	01 (6.66)	-	07 (46.66)	03 (20)	04 (26.66)	01 (6.66)

Health problem faced by elderly people

Table 3 Indicate the health problem faced by elderly people and conclude that regarding the problem related to eyes utmost of the respondents were having the problem of cataract and low vision 66.66% in both the male and female. With regard to dental problem dry mouth were faced by male respondents 53.33% whereas female faced the problem of sensation in teeth's. In consideration of gastrointestinal problem heart burn 66.66% were found in male whereas in

female liver problem 66.66% was faced by the respondents. On look upon the other physiological problem maximum of the male respondents were having the urinary problem 86.66% followed by blood pressure 80%; weight loss 66.66% on the other hand female faced the maximum problem due to diabetes and blood pressure 80% followed by asthma 60%. Majority of the respondents faced the blood pressure 80% and cataract 76.66% health problem in the body.

Table 3: Health problem faced by elderly people (multiple responses)

Health Problems	Male	Female	Total
Problems related to eyes			
Cataract	10 (66.66)	13 (86.66)	23 (76.66)
Glare	5 (33.33)	8 (53.33)	13 (43.33)
Low vision	10 (66.66)	12 (80.0)	22 (73.33)
Dry eyes	8 (53.33)	5 (33.33)	13 (43.33)
Dental problem			
Dry mouth	8 (53.33)	5 (33.33)	13 (43.33)
Sensation in teeth	10 (66.66)	8 (53.33)	18 (60.0)
Gastrointestinal problems			
Heart burn	10 (66.66)	9 (60.0)	19 (63.33)
Liver problem	9 (60.0)	10 (66.66)	19 (63.33)
Ulcer	2 (13.33)	5 (33.33)	7 (23.33)
Other physiological problems			
Cholesterol	5 (33.33)	2 (13.33)	7 (23.33)
Weight loss	10 (66.66)	8 (53.33)	18 (60.0)
Obesity	8 (53.33)	7 (46.0)	15 (50.0)
Anemia	5 (33.33)	10 (66.66)	15 (50.0)
Diabetes	8 (53.33)	12 (80.0)	20 (66.66)
Asthma	7 (46.0)	9 (60.0)	16 (53.33)
Hearing impairment	9 (60.0)	6 (40.0)	15 (50.0)
Urinary problem	13 (86.66)	10 (66.66)	23 (76.66)
Blood pressure	12 (80.0)	12 (80.0)	24 (80.0)
Depression	7 (46.0)	5 (33.33)	12 (40.0)
Sleep walking	3 (20.0)	5 (33.33)	8 (26.66)
Anxiety	6 (40.0)	9 (60.0)	15 (50.0)
Skin problem	7 (46.0)	4 (26.66)	11 (36.66)

Pattern of physical illnesses

Figure 1 shows that all old age home participants or elderly were suffering from one or the other physical health problem. Majority of the elderly were having single physical morbidity

in male and multiple physical morbidity in females followed by multiple morbidity in male and single morbidity in female. (First two table shows morbidity in male and last two in females)

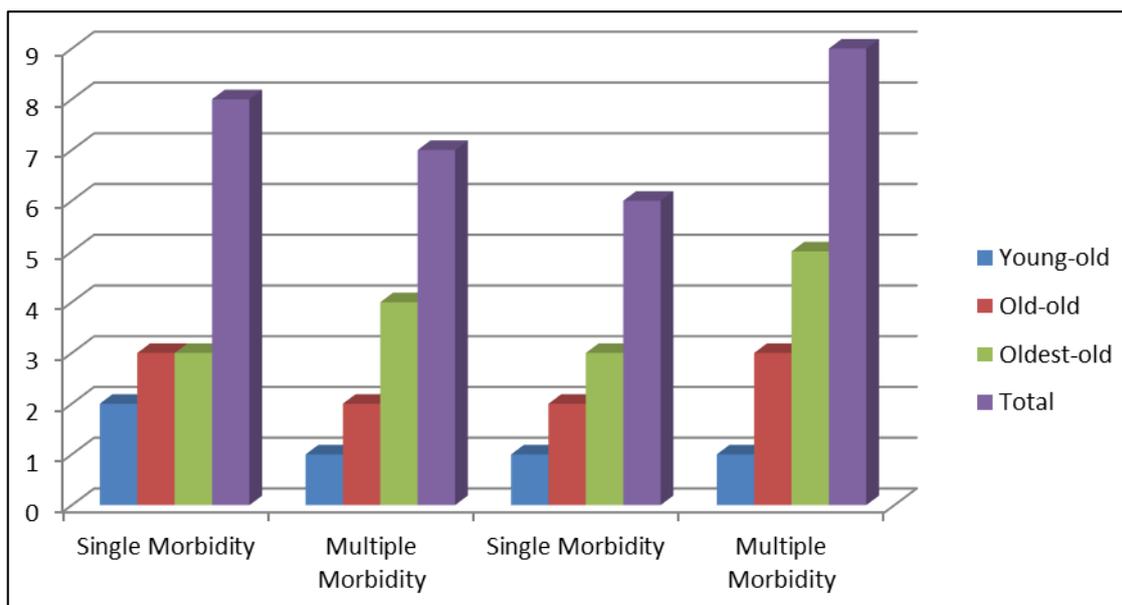


Fig 1: Percentage of physical morbidity in males and females

Discussion

A Old Age Home (Moksha), Hisar, Haryana was selected. Only 30 older adults had given consent to participate in the study. This old age home was residential and having the provision to accommodate both male and female older adults. A majority of the inhabitants of these old age homes were between the age group of 60 and 69 years followed by young old and oldest old. Educationally participants were maximally illiterate (43.33%) followed by just literate (26.33%). Females (60%) outnumbered males (53.33%) in terms of their widowed/widower status supports findings of a recent epidemiological study. A majority of females were dependent (73.33%), whereas a majority of males were dependent (60%) in terms of their financial status.

The overall prevalence of mental health problems in old age homes provides a finding that female suffers more than males (Male = 85% and Females = 48%). Depression was found to be the most common mental disorders. Depression, dementia in males and depression and anxiety in females supports earlier findings. Others have also reported that the role of depressive disorders was highest in the community studies of elderly. The occurrence of dementia in India has been reported to be variable, from 1.4% to 9.1%. Surprisingly, all females of the young-old group were mentally fit, which is against the previous findings, and females are found to be more susceptible to mental health problems than their counterpart males which supports the study.

All the elderly of old age homes were distress from multiple physical illness, no one reported themselves as healthy. A majority of the elderly were having multiple morbidity (Male = 70%; Female = 80%) supporting the findings of previous studies where it is reported that mental health morbidity is seldom an inaccessible event in elderly and a minimum of two/three other clinical diagnoses is a rule.

The prevalence of mental health problems as well as physical problems were found to be higher in old age homes. The reason could be significantly more psychological stressors, negligible family support, lack of medical care and facilities, restricted environment of old age homes and financial constraints, etc.

Mental illnesses were found to be very common among old age home elderly. There is need to screen out various stressor and reasons responsible for developing psychiatric problems in inmates of old age homes. Further, similar studies are needed to evaluate the findings of this study.

Conclusion

More than half of the elderly of old age homes were suffering from one or other mental health problems, females are more susceptible than males. Depression was the most common mental health problems in both males and females. Anxiety and dementia is also a leading problem in elderly. The elderly suffering from mental illness had one or more associated physical morbidity. All elderly of old age homes were having one or more physical morbidity. No one was free from any kind of mental or physical illness. It is observed that regarding the health problem majority if the respondents faced many problems i.e. cataract, blood pressure, diabetes, low vision, urinary problem etc. Maximum of the male respondents were having the urinary problem 86.66% followed by blood pressure 80%; weight loss 66.66% on the other hand female faced the maximum problem due to diabetes and blood pressure 80% followed by asthma 60%. Majority of the respondents faced the blood pressure 80% and cataract 76.66% health problem in the body.

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